

"A-RABS" IN SAN DIEGO

The palms and the architecture may deceive you, but its in San Diego's Balboa Park where these fighting "A-rabs" (each one a Navy Lad, and each one a VILTIS "Helping Hand") just finished dancing their debkas at the San Diego Folk Festival.



Front Row: Vyts Beliajus, Evelyn Prewet, Jack Mona (Vyts not in the Navy, nor are the women shown, tho Evelyn works in the Naval Hospital).

Back Row: Wayne Kelly, Roy Hinton, LaDona Larsen, Chuck Prater, Angie Pan, Robbie Miller and Clinton Taylor. Rita Farrell is absent from the picture. (Foto by Fin)

SAN DIEGO FESTIVAL PARTICIPANTS

San Diego may be at the tail end of "Folk Dance Mad" California, but the Diegans put on a festival as good as any of the groups up "Nawth." And what's more, ethnic groups were in the majority for the presentation of programs.

April 4th saw Balboa Park's Conference well packed beyond capacity and properly decorated, not gaudy but tastefully. Much credit to the whole committee. The dance selection could have been a bit easier. There were too many advanced dances which was fine for the Los Angeles area dancers, who loved it, but it kept many local dancers sitting out, as the majority here are beginners. One other thing should have been done, but for some no-good reason not done, was the omitting of a pre-festival party. The Californians who never seem to get enough of dancing, always expect pre-festival and post-festival parties. Many arrived Saturday for just that purpose and found nothing, except to go to Tijuana, which, on Saturday nights is a mad-house.

The demonstration parts of the program was opened with the typical shrill wail of Scotch bagpipes played by the Cameron Highland Band. In marched the band and dancers, in true fashion, precise in form and movement, a well trained group presented the Sword Dance and a Highland Reel from Tala. The group was directed by Mrs. Clark Sutorius. They were followed by six synthetic male Arabs and three Alma's (dancing girls). This type of dance, do nothing outstanding nor breathtaking, was unique for California who seem to see a certain same type of folk dance at all their festivals. The males entered with the traditional circle Debka and then performed the debka Rafiakh. Three sheerly donned maidens, with head and nose veils and lovely to look at, as if from the Arabian fairy tales, danced the girl's debka "Ya Dool Eynee", and kept good rhythm with their finger cymbals. They made a charming picture. They were followed once again by the boys who did the circle debka. Mrs. Guy May



The above picture appeared in the San Diego Union Tribune, showing Maude Sykes in Basque Costume; Leilani Papadol, Los Angeles, in Ukrainian; Vyts Beliajus in Arab; Al Pill of Los Angeles in a Mexican Charro, Evelyn Prewett in Lithuanian and Beatrice Sedivy in Czech.

rill played the piano.

The second intermission saw the Filipino Tinikling as danced by Jose De Vega and Lou Arciaga to the beating of the bamboos by Barbara Abranilla and Janet Gonzalez. This number was performed very excellently. It was danced in the best manner seen in a long time. The director of the group was Mrs. Julia Elegabo. Pruty Abranilla accompanist at the piano. The tempo, mood and atmosphere changed when Santa Monica's Gandy Dancers ran on as a bunch of mad Moldavians doing a mad Yula. Much action takes place in this brief number which leaves the dancers pooped and the audience exulting at a good, breathtaking performance.

Two tiny proteges of Senor Fernando Nandielo, dressed in the Spanish Jota costumes and looking as smart as any of Jose Greco's big girls, kept good timing with their castanets and feet as they performed a Bulerias. These two mites with the carriage of prima ballerinas, tho only of about 7-8 years old, knew their stuff.

During the third intermission, the Veselje Kolo Dancers, a group composed of ethnics and synthetics and directed by Don Landauer, danced Erdeljanka and Sar Planina. When they danced the Nebesko, two versions were noted, the traditional form of "heel turning" which was not seen by any other Federation group, and American version, probably influenced by the Greeks, where the pointing of foot forward and back is done instead. Perhaps that was to represent the two elements in the group. They did very commendable job.

The demonstration part was closed with the Lithuanian dance Mikita For Men by four men. It had very good audience appeal and no doubt, this number and Tinikling were the two best received numbers, perhaps mainly because of their newness in these parts and that certain strange, foreign charm about them. However, all numbers were a credit to the presenting groups.

FAMILY NIGHT WITH THE HERMANS

At the Michael Herman Folk Dance House, 108 W. 16th St., New York City, every third Sunday of the month, the families gather for folk dancing and fun. The fee is just \$1.50 per family, which includes the papa, mama and all their young'ns. The program of songs and dances is arranged for everyone's enjoyment.

L. A. INT. FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

Tho the ticket prices range from \$1.20 to \$3.60, the huge Philharmonic Auditorium of Los Angeles was packed with spectators on April 10th with guests who came to see and to enjoy the seventh annual Folk Festival. The whole event was well arranged and flowed smoothly. Each dance number was preceded by a folk song of that nationality sung by the Los Angeles City College Choir. They sang very well. Some of the songs were even sung in the native language.

1. **SWEDEN:** The first to appear were a brightly clad large group of Swedes who danced the Vava Vadmal. They were the right choice to open the program. Their dance and their appearance was very folkish, and one of the very few groups that gave this feeling. Their Vadmal Weave was well done. They employed throughout the dance a type of up-and-down hand motion so typical of Shaker dancing not seen before among any other Swedish dancers. The number was presented by the Vasa Folk Dance Group.

2. **IRELAND:** Girls of the St. Louis Nativity School of El Monte presented ably the Irish dances, a Six Hand reel, and the Four Hand Jig which was particularly good.

3. **GUATEMALA:** God only knows what they danced. It was a real mish-mash of supposedly "ancient", but gone modern, plus a group doing Latin two-stepping, or whatever you want to call it. Los Chapines Guatemaltecos occupied the time.

4. **SCOTLAND:** Jean MacDougals flingers flung a Fling and a Sword Dance. There was a tiny tyke who stole all the attention from the big girls on the program. They were O. K.

5. **FRENCH APACHE:** Tho well done, this is a most irksome number in more than one way. First of all, it is not folk in even the remotest sense of the word, at least not the way they do it. Just as it is wrong to represent an American as a gangster on account of a Dillinger or a Capone, so is it wrong to misrepresent the whole French nation with a dance which is supposedly done by hoodlums and harlots in isolated dives of Paris. It is not in good taste and it is doing the French an injustice.

This group was, without any doubt, the best trained group as far as precision and good dancing is concerned, but as the strip tease in American dives does not represent American folk dancing, nor does Apache represent French folk.

6. **KOREA:** Rose Aiyuon Lee did a wonderful job in her "Monk Dance." Tho nearly all in the audience never before saw a Korean dance, Miss Lee made them like their strange movement. She moved about like a benevolent ghost.

7. **MEXICO:** Lily Aguilar concocted a few hot tamales and enchiladas and cooked up the Marcha Zacatecas. Female dressed as males, inspite of the rich Charro costumes, were distracting. he Zapadeados were terrific and the picture colorful, but it was dance studio stuff and not folk.

8. **ISRAEL:** The Jewish Young Fraternalists presented supposedly, a Sherr and Hava Netsey BeMakhol. It was Shmaltzed up, but real good. They probably think that folk dancing means; to take a folk tune and interpret it with modern leap steps. They leaped in twos, they leaped in threes and they leaped some more. The Sherr and the Israeli dance looked alike, and in the Hava Netsey they even misplaced the only authentic step. It seems that some minorities who think that they are not loved, try to shmaltz up their unique and rich heritage with something that will look real "goyish", to prove, perhaps, that in reality there is no folkloristic difference, which is wrong

reasoning and such groups suffer of an inferiority complex. This was an ethnic group that misrepresented itself.

The word "folk dancing" was abused by too many leaders and this was to have been a "folk festival." It said so in bold letters.

9. **ARMENIA:** The Armenian Folk Dancers made a most appealing scene, especially the girls in their native costumes. The men wore Russian. Probably the women come from Turkey where Armenian customs are still practiced and the males from the Soviet Republic. The women were charming and their first number was likewise, but then the males reverted to a pure Ukrainian Kazachok and did all the Prisiadkis in the book, plus. Now I don't know whom they represented, Aram or "Mother Russia." They were excellent dancers and the native music was most pleasing.

10. **JAVA:** Petit and dainty Devi Dja with two assistants and to the playing of the gamelan did a charming number called Serempi. She is beyond criticism. She is a professional and outstanding in her field.

11. **UKRAINA:** Good dancers, richly costumed. They didn't do a Hopak as stated, but a Kozachok. The male dancers were terrific. This was a good number with which to close the first half of the program.

12. **UNITED STATES:** It did my heart good twice during this presentation. 1) To see a Negro group representing U. S. with real American folk lore. For while Americans followed their European forbearers in continuing and creating a new lore here, mainly, an Anglo-Celtic culture, the Negroes created stuff caused by the new conditions that afronted them here. Thus we have spirituals, boogwoogie, jazz, blues, etc. But many Negro groups shy away from anything that is considered of Negro culture and they prefer aping the White man's stuff which is often trite and which the Negroes do badly, while the White man man tries heard to claim the Negro creations for his own. 2) For once I saw a group of colored kids do something in which they felt at home. They were in their element and they did a good job. It is high time the Negroes started taking pride in their heritage and creativity.

13. **GERMANY:** The Danube Dance League danced a smoothly flowing Ronde to waltz time (laender), the Treffnertanz. It was not an exciting dance, but well done and restful.

14. **BASQUE:** The Basque renditions had a remote resemblance to the other Celtic dances of Erin. One wonders if the savants tried to bunch up the Basques and Gaels into on Celtic league because of the dances. The Basque dances tho were very charming and delightful. The Fandango Arin-Arin resembled the dances of Iberia.

15. **TURKEY:** A lovely Turkish maiden, Clarice Adegian (probably Armenian), did well a Harem dance. There was no "harem" done, for, the men loved it: Every twist of it.

16. **JAPAN:** A group of girls richly kimono'ed did a Streamer Dance "Sarashi", which was about as authentic as they come and as pleasurable as can be to watch. The movement of the streamers was in such a perfect rhythm, that it looked as if a row of pure white, wooly lambies were jumping over a stream. Delightful in all respects.

17. **LITHUANIA:** This is a group of very good looking boys and girls and they make a most wholesome picture. The Chain dance was well done, and Norman Kades who starred in it, is an impressive dancer. There was an obvious accident during the Grand Mill dance, but it did not detract from the delightfulness of the number.

18. **HUNGARY:** The Bakersfield Circle 8, all "Old Stock Americans" of the Anglo-Gaelic mixture with no drop of Magyar in them, did proud the Hungarians. I'm positive the Magyars present must have been delighted with order,